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Evil Exists Because Love Requires a Choice

by Mark F. Horstemeyer and Feng Wang

One of the authors nephew's three-month-old child died just before Christmas. In the same time frame, his son told him of a three-year-old girl who got a parasite in her eye that gnawed through into her brain and killed her. Recently, we heard of a nine-year-old girl who was raped, beaten, and murdered. Considering these three circumstances, the following questions were asked by our family members: How can a good, beneficent God allow these evils to happen to apparently innocent people? If there was a God, why didn't He save these vulnerable and precious children?

Based on these circumstances and so many everyday injustices, one may conclude that there is no God or that God is not just and not good. These are not new questions. The Greek philosopher from Athens, Epicurus (341-270 BC), stated something similar:

> *God either wishes to take away evils and is unable; or he is able, and is unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able; or he is both willing and able. If he is willing and unable, he is feeble, which does not agree with the character of God; if he is able and unwilling, he is malicious, which is equally at odds with God; if he is neither willing nor able, he is both malicious and feeble and therefore not God; if he is both willing and able, which is alone suitable to God, from what source then come evils? Or why does he not remove them?*

Some of our family members have concluded that there is no God; or that there is a God, but He is not good; or there is a God who is good, but He is not good to others or to themselves.

The statements from Epicurus and our family members seem logical at first. However, we can conclude something completely different when considering the nature and character of God by thinking about the definition of evil and how injustices come about or why God even allows evil. What Epicurus failed to understand is that there was another option he did not consider. That is, that a God of love, who is good and just by nature, must also allow for choice so that love can exist. He cares immensely about the innocent lives lost. In fact, He is willing that no innocent life be eternally lost so that no injustice occurs. He is able to intervene to stop all injustices, but He has to be internally consistent with Himself and His laws because He cannot violate Himself.

The bottom line is that God is a being of love (or love-being) who created humans with the capacity to love so that they can love as He does. Now, love, by definition, needs to be chosen, so human free will was required when the Creator designed humans, who could freely choose to accept or reject love. In other words, there are laws of love that cannot be violated because of God's goodness and justness, and because He made humans in His image with the freedom to choose. It's that freedom, that real freedom to obey God's commands or to reject them, that allows each of us to perpetrate injustices. Thus, humans live in a world where injustices may be perpetrated against us and our family members. Some humans, over time, chose to reject love from their Creator (and from other humans), and that rejection of love produces not only evil but also an inherited internal state of sin that produces corrupted offspring of evil-natured humans. Over time, increased rejection of love by created love-beings increases the amplitude of evil. In addition, created beings like angels have rejected God's orders and are now known as evil spirits or demons. When these evil angels and humans who rejected God's love join together, evil increases. As the laws of love allow love to increase, so the laws of love allow evil to increase as the rejection of love is in operation.

As engineers, we employ a Unified Modeling Language (UML) Information Flow Diagram (IFD), as illustrated in Figure 1, to illustrate the cause-effect relationships between God, humans, and angels, which may be helpful to the reader. The UML IFD is a graphical representation used to depict the flow of information between components. Figure 1 provides a high-level view of how God's goodness is accepted or rejected by humans and angels. One can see that goodness is, by nature, existent within the Triune nature of God and, out of that goodness, love effuses.

To capture finer-grained details of the decision-making process in Figure 1, we use a finite state machine diagram in Figure 2. A finite state machine can model decision-making logic in systems. The

See **Evil** *on page 4*

Math Matters

Plants and Mathematics

by Don DeYoung, PhD

The Nov/Dec 2008 Math Matters article describes an unexpected math ability of dogs. They are observed to take the path of least time in running toward a goal, thus solving a classic calculus minimization problem.

Plants also demonstrate math expertise in problem solving. Consider the flowering plant Thale cress or mouse-ear (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) which often grows along roadsides. It is the first plant with an entirely sequenced genome, completed in 2000. This much-studied plant is found to respond quickly to stimuli including light, wind, humidity, and gravity (Riviere and Meroz, 2023). Little is known about how plants without a brain or neural system are able to react to external factors.

British scientists have described the mathematical expertise of Thale cress (Scialdone, et al., 2013). Like other plants, it captures solar energy to convert carbon dioxide to sugars and starch. As night falls and photosynthesis ceases, the plant's metabolism slows but does not stop. Instead, the plant switches over to its stored starch reserves.

The researchers measured the overnight decrease in starch within the plant leaves, and were surprised to find that starch reserves lasted almost precisely until the light of dawn. The plant demonstrates an awareness of the amount of stored starch (S) and the duration of darkness (T). The rate of starch consumption is then determined by the ratio S/T, with time T provided by the plant's internal circadian clock. The interaction of starch content, time, and rate of consumption comprise a nontrivial math problem with the solution determining the survival of the plant.

When darkness was artificially lengthened or shortened by several hours in lab studies, the plant's starch consumption was temporarily upset. After several days with the new schedule, however, the plant acclimated to again exhaust its starch reserve just as light reappeared. Clearly there are remarkable molecular processes occurring within plant cells.

Energy management applies to all forms of life. Beyond the plant world, for example, energy regulation is needed by birds during migration and while incubating eggs. Mathematics is the language of creation found in all living creatures for their survival and well-being.

Thale cress plant (Arabidopsis thaliana). Image from Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Riviere, M. and Y. Meroz. 2023. Plants sum and subtract stimuli over different timescales. *PNAS 120*(42):e2306655120.

Scialdone, A., et al. 2013. Arabidopsis plants perform arithmetic division to prevent starvation at night. *eLife 2*:e00669.

Thanks to David Coppedge for suggesting the topic of plant mathematics on his excellent *Creation Evolution Headlines* website.

Table of Contents

Evil Exists Because Love Requires a Choice 1

Math Matters 2

The Global Extent of the Flood in Scripture 3

Creation Research and Apologetics 5

Prayer Matters 8

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The Global Extent of the Flood in Scripture

by Lindsay Harold, M.A.T

Q: Couldn't the Genesis flood have been a local or regional flood? The word *erets* (earth) in Hebrew, which is used in the flood account, doesn't necessarily refer to the entire planet. It can mean just a land or region.

A: It is true that *erets* often refers to dirt or land more generally or to a nation or region. However, the case for a global flood in Genesis does not rest on *erets* meaning the whole planet. The meaning depends on the context in which it is used. There are multiple aspects of the Biblical account which show us that the Genesis flood was global.

The Flood Killed All Terrestrial Life

The text of Genesis is clear that all humans and all air-breathing, land-dwelling animals were killed in the flood, except those on the ark. Some have suggested that this was a regional flood that killed all the humans, so it was anthropologically universal but not global. Yet the Biblical text clearly states that it also destroyed all terrestrial animals, not just the humans. A regional flood that was only anthropologically universal does not fit the description given in scripture.

> *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.* Genesis 6:7

> *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.* Genesis 7:21-23

It is difficult to imagine how a local or regional flood could kill all terrestrial life. Surely animals would have lived outside the region affected by the flood. In fact, it is difficult to explain how all humans could be killed in a local or regional flood, even if they all lived in one small area. While local floods can indeed be very deadly, they don't kill everyone in the affected region. There are always survivors who cling to floating objects, climb to higher ground, or simply were not in the flood zone at the time. The universal destruction of all animals and humans in the flood supports a global extent.

A Limited Flood Does Not Require an Ark

Another objection against a local flood is that it makes the construction of an ark unnecessary. If the flood would cover only a certain region, then there was no need for Noah's family to spend so much effort building a boat or taking animals with them. There would be animals living outside the flood zone, so they would not need to be preserved. Noah and his family could simply move outside the flooded area. God would know where to send them. This is what God did with Lot's family when He sent judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). He didn't tell them to build a bomb shelter and bring all the animals with them to keep them alive. He moved them out of the affected area. The fact that God instructed Noah and his family to build an ark and take every kind of terrestrial animal with them only makes sense if this was a global flood and a boat was the only means of survival.

God also states directly that the purpose of the ark was to keep the people and animals alive.

> *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.* Genesis 6:17-20

Local Floods Do Not Cover Mountains

Genesis records that the water covered the mountains and high hills. This can only happen in a global flood.

> *And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.* Genesis 7:19-20

Even if we discount the universal language that says **all** the high hills under the **whole** heaven were covered, a local

See **Flood** *on page 6*

Evil

continued from page 1

square blocks in Figure 2 are called states, while transitions and actions are represented by arrows. The diamonds in Figure 2 are decision points, which represent different events or decisions that trigger transitions. These decisions (choosing to accept or reject love), in turn, have consequences, where the consequences of different choices are depicted as "eternal life" or "evil" in Figure 2.

Specifically, at the top, we have a self-existent Creator God who is good, just, and full of love. Out of His goodness, love effuses. Out of His love, He created angels and humans with free will to accept or reject love. If a human says "yes" to "receive love," as illustrated with red in the figure, then, by the justice system defined by the law of love, eternal life is provided for the human in which the end state is heaven. Hence, love is fulfilled in eternity-future as the number of love-beings has grown from eternity-past, where there was only God. Now, if the human says "no" to "receive love," then evil results. Hence, evil arises from humans, not God. Thus, when an innocent baby suffers and dies, the result comes from the human condition of rejection of God that predates the baby's time of suffering and death. Even after evil, a human has a chance for "repentance," which means to turn back to saying "yes" to "receive love." The justice system will reward the repentance with eternal life and a final state of heaven. The Bible is clear that The Creator love-being interjected Himself into the space-time-matter continuum in the form of Jesus Christ to redeem back, legally, the love relationships with the created love-beings—that is, humans. Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection paid the legal price for the justice system's requirement of sin atonement. However, if a human continues toward evil, the justice system will prosecute judgment, punishing the evil that was done as a consequence of rejecting love. The circle on the left side of Figure 2 signifies that evil can increase as the number of humans increases and as time increases. When the first human rejected love, this led to generation after generation continuing the rejection of love. Consequently, evil continued to increase. Hence, today's evil is a consequence of a long history of rejection of love over time. Thus, when humans or angels reject God's love, they will live eternally away from love, which is eternal death, the state of which is hell.

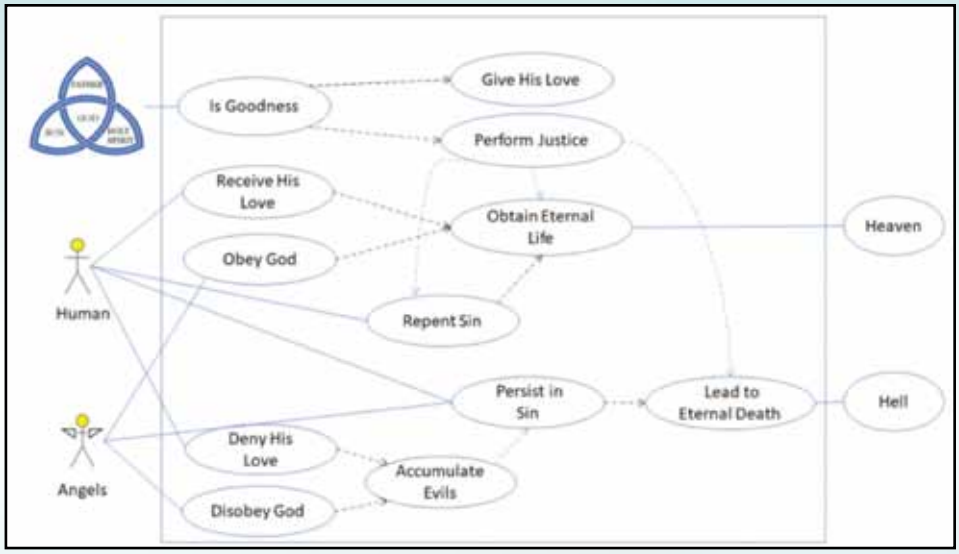


Figure 1. UML Information flow diagram illustrating the causal relationships.

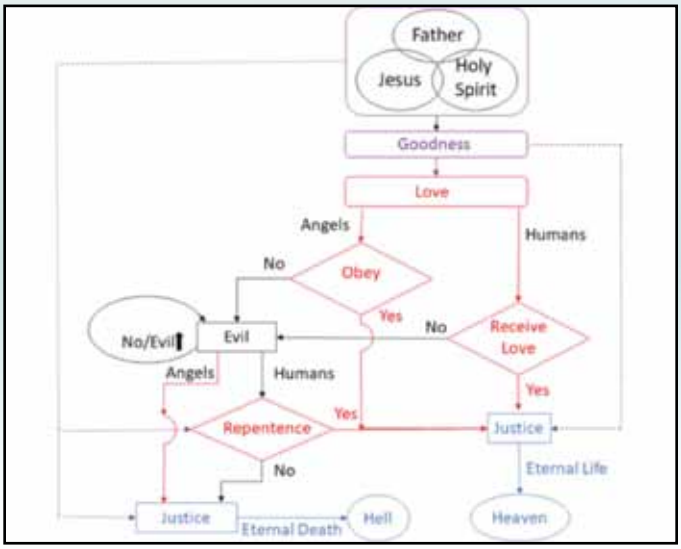


Figure 2. Finite state diagram illustrating the different states and decision points that tie together the cause-effect relationships.

Love is so important to the Creator that He was willing to risk rejection, and the consequential evil and hell, for love to exist. To the Creator, love is the prime motivation of the universe and the reason for the created love-beings to exist. The cause-effect actions of following the path of love ends in a particular path of life, joy, peace, etc. whereas the cause-effect actions of following a path of the rejection of love ends in a path of destruction, evil, and death.

Now, let us address the specific concerns of our family members. Love, along with the Creator, is eternal, because the triune God, by nature, is love. When a love-being is originally created, love is capacitated immediately upon the creation, and the soul of the created love-being is eternal at this point. Because the Creator love-being can reach into temporal time at any eternal time, then He knows what is best instantaneously for the created love-being, including the length of time for which the created love-being should be placed on earth.

Let us explain the physics of this a bit more. Think of a clock with the Creator existing at the center of the clock. He is able to reach to 5 o'clock instantaneously or 8 o'clock instantaneously and *at the same time*, because he is at the center. In the space-time-matter continuum of the

See **Evil** *on page 6*

Apologetics Matters

Creation Research and Apologetics

by Tom Carpenter

We are living in a unique time in history, and creation science has an important role in defending the Christian faith. Understanding the nature of apologetics, along with the role of science in culture, is the key to fulfilling this role or to failing in this role. Only a biblical framework can provide the clarity and coherency necessary to show how apologetics and science work together to tackle the challenges for the gospel today.

The task of apologetics must begin by and be driven by acknowledging God as the ultimate reference point because, if it does not, then it begins and is driven by another ultimate authority. The task of defending the faith involves vindicating the Christian philosophy of life against the challenges of an autonomous philosophy of life expressed in many different ways.

However, this does not mean presenting obscure arguments separate from evidence for the faith and, for the sake of this discussion, scientific evidence. Over sixty years of peer-reviewed scientific research provided by the Creation Research Society and other organizations have given the Church a powerful apologetic for strengthening the Christian worldview.

The value of this evidence gained through the years has been critical for a society that honors science in so many ways. It is specifically through creation research that Christians have been able to defend their worldview from not only evolutionary thinking but also from science that has become self-dependent, self-defining, and self-attesting. Positioned in this arrogant way, science provides mankind with a way to suppress the truth of God's revelation around him.

Over the years, the successful efforts of many of those in creation research (many of you) began with the God-given task of apologetics as a part of the natural thinking of a Christian. This reliance on faith as the fundament for action is what has allowed creation researchers the ability to account for their reasoning and their scientific efforts when a non-Christian cannot. It is through positioning reason and science as subordinate to God that reason and science become alive, credible, and powerful. The unbeliever, of course, can use science and reason in incredible ways, but they cannot account for reason and science and are simply borrowing them from the Creator.

As Christians, creation researchers have done a tremendous service by providing apologetic explanations and evidence. The world around us needs to be understood in the context of the revealed character and nature of God because, if it isn't, then…*it isn't.* CM

Don't forget to renew your CRS membership. If you have not renewed your membership, this will be your last issue of *Creation Matters*.

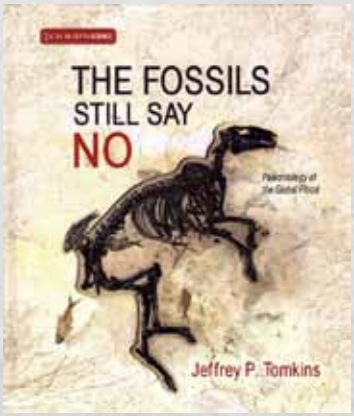
Erratum

An error occurred in the last issue of Creation Matters (Vol. 29 No. 1) on Page 2 in the Math Matters article. The figures for loss of solar mass were incorrect. The sun loses about 4.3 billion kg of mass per second (4.7 million tons/sec) due to nuclear fusion.

Available in the CRS Bookstore

The Fossils Still Say No: Paleontology of the Global Flood

Jeffrey Tomkins



In this new book, Dr. Jeffrey Tomkins builds upon the groundwork laid by Dr. Duane Gish (Evolution: The Fossils Say No, published 1972) by integrating the fossil record with stratigraphic data. Combining up-to-date fossil evidence with ICR's ongoing geological research, he provides a more complete picture of Flood paleontology and what it means. Join Dr. Tomkins as he sifts through the fossils, layer by layer, to show— yet again—that the fossils say no to evolution and yes to a progressive global flood.

Institute for Creation Research. 2023. 130 pages (hard cover).

www.creationresearch.org/store • 877-CRS-BOOK

Evil

continued from page 4

cosmos, the law of causality will produce the effects at 8 o'clock that started at 5 o'clock (and 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, etc). So, although the law of causality makes circumstances sequential for humans who are stuck in time, the Creator love-being can reach in and out of the temporal space-time-matter continuum at any temporal time at the same eternal time. Hence, the Creator love-being can know what is best at 8 o'clock for a created love-being based on what He saw at the same time at 5 o'clock. However, when the Creator love-being reaches into the space-time-matter continuum to end a human's life on earth, He will not violate the laws of love, which are a legal matter related to justice.

Epicurus and our family members recognize evil, good, and justice in their interpretation of pain, suffering, and/or death. However, they may not have thought about or agree with the totality of God's goodness, love, and justice working together from a perspective of eternity. Our family members recognized that pain, suffering, and death are evil, if you will, and the situations did not seem just because the children who died were innocent. These are legal issues, which means that there are laws, like laws of physics, that must be abided. If evil happened, then how would our family members want evil to be punished? It's about perspective at this point. Let's face it; when one compares one year or a hundred years to eternity (mathematically speaking, infinity represents eternity), either number of years (one or one hundred) is extremely small! Hence, the point is not to live a long time on earth but to receive God's love on earth in order to live eternally with him. Although the circumstances described above about the deaths of the young children appear to be bad, their futures were secured in heaven in eternity by God's love.

One final point needs to be mentioned regarding angels and demons. Angels that disobeyed God, and because of that are evil, now harass humans to think and act in evil ways. The devil came to kill, steal, and destroy humans. Hence, there are entities for good and entities for evil. If people reject God's love, then they have inherently given themselves over to the devil in this world, and their end state is hell. As evil continues to operate on a human on earth, it can build to help the human reach a place of desperation for repentance, which will allow a human to "receive love" again because of what Jesus Christ accomplished with His death, burial, and resurrection. The justice in the law of love will allow a human to come back to "receive love" and, consequently, receive eternal life to live in the state of heaven. CM

Flood

continued from page 3

or regional flood cannot cover mountains, even just in one region. Water flows downhill. In order to flood a mountain, it is necessary to flood the whole planet. Thus, the description of mountains being covered with water tells us this was a global flood. One could argue that Genesis is wrong, but it is unreasonable to suggest that it doesn't intend to teach a global flood.

Local Floods Do Not Remain Flooded for Months

Genesis gives us a timeline for the flood. Contrary to popular belief, the flood did not last a mere 40 days. The flood began on the 17th day of the 2nd month in the 600th year of Noah's life (Genesis 7:11). There were 40 days of rain, but we are also told that the waters prevailed upon the earth for 150 days (Genesis 7:24). After the 150 days, the waters began to go down. The ark ran aground on the 17th day of the 7th month, some 5 months after the flood began (Genesis 8:4). Nearly 2½ months later, as the waters gradually diminished, the tops of the mountains were finally visible.

> *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.* Genesis 8:5

Genesis records that it was 7½ months from the beginning of the flood until the tops of the mountains could be seen. The people and animals spent more than a year in the ark before the ground was dry enough to disembark (Genesis 8:13).

How does a local flood not only cover the mountains with water, but also hold that water in place for months? This is simply not possible, naturally speaking. To match the description in the text, a local flood would necessitate some sort of supernatural wall to hold the flood waters in just that region so they could rise high enough to cover the mountains and remain there for months. A global flood is clearly the more reasonable explanation for water covering the mountains for that length of time, and it fits with the rest of the account. This is yet another aspect of the story that requires a global extent of the flood. It's not just about the usage of a word or two. It's the entire narrative.

The Ark Landed in the Mountains

The Genesis account states that the ark landed in the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:4). While we do not know for sure that the ark landed on Mount Ararat specifically, it was in a mountainous region. The ark ran aground as the water went down, and only later were other mountain peaks visible as the water continued to drain away.

In a local flood scenario, this landing spot is implausible. Local floods flow downhill. The ark would most likely be swept into low-lying areas far from the mountains, especially if it floated a long time. How does a boat land in a mountainous region in a local flood? Local floods occur in valleys and plains, not in the mountains.

In a global flood, the landing spot is much more reasonable. The ark would land on whatever nearby bit of land was available as the water level began to go down.

See **Flood** *on page 7*

Flood

continued from page 6

The mountains were at sea level when the ark landed. Because it had already run aground, the ark was not washed down into the lower plains but remained in the mountains.

God Promised to Never Again Send Such a Flood

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah's family and with the animals that there would never again be such a flood on the Earth to destroy all life.

> *And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.* Genesis 9:8-11

Because this promise was given to both humans and animals, this indicates again that the flood was universally destructive to both humans and animals. Only those on the ark survived.

If this covenant refers to a global flood that killed all terrestrial life and which will never occur again, then God has kept His promise. On the other hand, if the Genesis flood was limited to just a land or region, then we have a theological problem. There have been many local and regional floods since the time of Noah. Did God fail to keep His promise? This would be a serious accusation against God's character.

The Rest of the Bible Treats the Flood as Historical and Universal

There are multiple allusions to Noah's flood throughout scripture, including in the New Testament. The rest of the Bible treats the Genesis flood as historical. Hebrews 11, known as the Hall of Faith, lists Noah as a real person who prepared an ark to save his household because of his faith. II Peter alludes to the flood in chapters 2 and 3 as an example of the gravity of God's judgment and the certainty of God's coming judgment of the Earth.

Significant theology rests upon the universality of the Genesis flood. For example, Jesus spoke of His second coming as being like the flood of Noah's day. It will be a sudden and universal event, with no escape for those who have rejected Christ.

> *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* Matthew 24:37-39

I Peter 3 speaks of the flood as a picture of salvation in which eight people were saved through water just as Christians go through baptism in water when they are saved. The parallels here are profound. Just as salvation from the flood came only by being in the ark, so only those who are in Christ can be saved from hell. All others will be lost.

If the flood was not a universal event, this undermines the theology that has been built on this premise in scripture. If someone could survive Noah's flood outside the ark, that would suggest there might be a way of salvation outside Jesus.

Conclusion

It is important that we properly interpret scripture in its context. The account of the flood in Genesis shows clearly, in multiple ways, that it was a global event. The text simply cannot be reconciled with a local or regional flood. Though some people have argued that certain words in the flood account are not always used in a universal sense, the argument for a global flood has never depended solely on those words. The description of what happened does not fit a local flood. A local flood cannot cover the mountains and keep them inundated for months or kill all the people and animals on the planet. A local flood cannot land the ark in the mountains. In fact, an ark is not needed at all for a local flood. Since God promised never to send another flood like the Genesis flood, if the flood was only local, that would make God a liar. These are major, independent reasons to affirm a global flood just from the scriptures, even without looking at the scientific and historical evidence that supports a global flood. Only a global flood can make sense of all the aspects of the Genesis account and the way the flood is referenced in the rest of scripture. CM

Creation Research Society
Research is our middle name

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Prayer Matters

Praise: Thank you for all your prayers and financial support!

Prayer: Please pray for the upcoming board meeting on May 30-June 1. Pray for wisdom as board members make decisions for the society and as they travel to and from the meeting.

Please pray for this year's CRS conference. We want this conference to glorify God, to inform attendees of new advances in creation research, and to be a beneficial time of Christian fellowship. We also pray for safe travel for all those attending.

Please pray for Dr. Joel Brown and family as he moves to Arizona around the first of August to take up his new responsibilities as Director of the Van Andel Creation Research Center.

Thank You!

Register for the 2024 CRS Conference

The 2024 CRS Conference will be held July 25-27 at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY. Registration is currently in Early Bird Pricing through May 31. Sign up now to save money and ensure your spot. For no additional charge, each attendee can also choose a workshop in astronomy, geology, biology, or education.

To learn more about the 2024 conference or to register, visit creationresearch.org/conference-2024. There is also special pricing available for conference attendees at the nearest hotel. Information on this special deal and a list of other nearby hotels can be found on the registration page. There are a limited number of rooms available at the discounted rate, so make your reservations soon.

Past CRS conferences have been wonderful opportunities to connect with other creationists, discuss ideas, collaborate on projects, and learn about the current state of creation science. If you enjoy the CRSQ and Creation Matters, you don't want to miss the CRS Conference. There really is no other conference like this one!